

**Volunteer's Green, Brown's Court, Round Church Green Improvements with ARPA Funds Committee** Minutes Nov. 9, 2023

Members attending: Kendra Kiskie, Denise Barnard, Tess Storrs, Fran Thomas, Megan Andrews, Jeanne Agner

Guests- Mark Fausel from Recreation Committee, Lisa from Selectboard, Velma Plouffe

We do not have minutes from our first 2 meetings as we did not have officers or a clerk

Thursday Nov 28 - We met and reviewed our task. Made a list of areas and items to study.

Tuesday, Oct 10 - We did a "walk about" at Round Church Green and Volunteer Park. We did not have time before dark to continue on to Brown's Court. Each of us will take a look at Brown's Court on our own. Made a list of items to research. Divided tasks.

First item of business was to elect officers.

Co- chairs will be Denise Barnard and Kendra Kiskie

Secretary - Minutes - Jeanne Agner

Discussed meeting day and date. Mary Lefebvre cannot make Thursday night.

Tuesdays seem to have many meetings. Selectboard meets Mondays. Discussed meeting opposite Mondays of Selectboard.

We scheduled our next meeting for **MONDAY, Nov. 27.** at 7pm.

We began with some clarification as to what our role is as compared to the other town committees. Denise explained what was discussed at the selectboard meeting when this committee was created. Her understanding is that we are to gather information from various town committees to determine what they see as needing to be done.

Lisa mentioned that she and Jeff met with the recreation committee on Tuesday to hear about what they have been doing . The Rec Committee has gathered a lot of community input and feedback. Lisa stated that getting information is an outreach; that's one kind of process, using that information is another kind of process. And then turning it into action is another kind of process.

Lisa said she thinks that the information gathering is good, we've got some really good feedback, it's time to use it, and start actually making specific proposals for equipment and for programs whatever that might be. And it's time to get prices, we need to get things on the budget, we need to start spending the ARPA money. Lisa said that the public has spoken and the Select Board has provided money and opportunity. So it's time to start cashing in on that.

There was discussion about general maintenance and who is responsible for that. We are asked to include a suggested budget for maintenance when we can with our quotes. ARPA money does not go toward maintenance, but we should be able to get some general ideas when we get quotes. We will pass maintenance information on to the board for them to determine where that would go in the town budget.

Reports from members about their research:

## **VOLUNTEER GREEN**

### **Playground structure** - Jeanne

Our playground is almost 30 years old, gets heavy play, has survived 2 major floods and other minor flooding. It has reached the end of its life span. There is not anything on the actual structure that should be salvaged. The swing bays might be ok. Chains will need to be replaced

We plan to meet with 3 vendors.

1. Kirsten Santor and I met e with Colin O'Brien from Landshapes, the company that installed the original playground. He will be getting a design and some quotes. We mentioned that several in the community have expressed the desire for natural and wooden structures. Colin shared that wooden structures might be less expensive, but they become dangerous with splinters in a few years. He said a wooden structure might has the life span of 5 years in a town park with heavy use vs life span of 25 years for a metal and plastic structure. Wood is more easily vandalized. And it might not be at all practical in an area prone to floods. See notes for more detail.
2. We are meeting Justin Mansfield from Miracle Playground this Friday
3. Jeanne will contact the rep that Kendra has been in touch with to set up a third mtg.

When we meet with the reps we are asking that each design be more than ADA guidelines for accessibility (people with mobility or other difficulties can access a part with some help). We want the playground to be *inclusive* (children can independently access many parts of the playground).

Mark F shared some of the work of the recreation committee. Jeanne attended the last meeting. The rec committee has had a lot of discussion about a new playground. They had submitted an application for a VOREC grant for a playground that was denied. They are going to tweak and resubmit for the new VOREC grant that has a deadline of Dec 31. Hopefully we will get some grant money to help stretch the playground budget. The rec committee and the 3parks committee will work together on the playground design and proposal for this project to be included in the ARPA parks package. Mark has agreed to be a liaison and attend our meetings. Jeanne will attend the rec committee meetings.

### **Farmer's Market** Jeanne

Jeanne met with Stephinie Choate and Marissa Green on 9/23 (see notes on file)

They both mentioned bathrooms as first priority. Bathrooms are too far away for many patrons. A border of some type (shrubs) along the river's edge near the bandstand. The bank is very steep along that area and children play actively there. Need bandshell accessibility. More seating - only one really heavy table for people to eat the goodies they purchase. Pavilion or some type of shelter to get under when it rains. Divots/ holes in grassy areas. Playground area also needs a bathroom. Perhaps a path from sidewalk along crab apple trees that would come right into the area. Patrons allso a better way to access the bandshell area from the parking lot.

Porta Potty- Denise stated there should be a wheelchair accessible porta potty at the playground area and bandstand area **now**. Town would know the cost as a porta potty has been next to the bathrooms since the flood. Denise will ask how and where that item should go in the town budget for the future. Is there a revenue stream from the Farmer's Market that would help pay for that? Denise is going to look into that,

### **Bandstand and bandstand area** Fran and Denise

- Gary Bressor is consulting with some structural steel guys. The cross beams are off/warping and the bandstand integrity compromised. He has some general quotes as to replacing the cross beams and the corner posts. He's had 2 structural engineers looking at it. Miles Jenness gave a quote of \$12,000 to \$13,000 to fix the cross beams and corner posts. Discussion of contactors vs engineers. Will quotes require one or the other?
  - Cement floor. Gary thinks the slab will have to be replaced. Maybe it will need more fill in the base. Concrete people - John Wood - Denise will talk with him
  - Talked about Regional Planning possible looking at ramps for accessibility. Denise and Fran looking into that
  - Discussion of a possible berm being built up around the base of the bandstand as a natural accessibility. Something so people don't fall off the cement stage.
  - Landscaping around the trees (tree work at all 3 parks) Ask retired landscape architect Terry Boyle, from Huntington, for his thoughts.
  - Fran and Denise talked about some way of extending the roof out on the bandshell so that it would cover the entire bandshell . Would an extension be feasible? Who to ask about that?
  - What about extending a path from the sidewalk along the side of the crabapples to the bandshell area/ cement sidewalk or path. Denise will talk with John Wood.
  - Ramp from the parking lot to the bandshell area. Who to get a quote?
- Fran is trying to connect with Tyler, the zoning administrator, to get some clarity on what can and cannot be done in the park.
- Who do we talk with about an accessible ramp to the bandshell? Is that regional planning?

### **Path/ Accessible trail** - Fran

An accessible path through or around the volunteer green area. Walking path for elders who'd like an easy path, caregivers and babies in strollers, adults to walk while children play on the playground. Fran sent a document to the committee. Basically 2 quotes. Discussion of paved path vs.packed path. Quotes are for paved and sure pack. Again, we must determine what is best for an area that will get flooded. Who do we consult on this?

Megan stated that Pete said he'd like to see a paved path and that he could plow it. He stated that if he can get more people in the park walking in a snowstorm vs people walking on the streets and Cochran Road, it would be so much better for the sidewalk plowing.

### **Tree Pruning and Grass Improvement** - Fran and Tess

- Met with Chris Felony to discuss tree pruning in all 3 of the parks. There are some dead branches in trees at all 3 parks. Also looked at pruning the crab apple trees at Volunteers Green
- Brown's Court has trees and tree branches over the softball field, the backstop and trees eaning and branches hanging over the area that we are looking at for pickleball court. Chris is getting us a quote for all of that.
- Looked at barren areas of soil with Nick George, who has the mowing contract for the town. He is going to give us a quote for soil and grass improvement at Round Church Green and Volunteer's Green. He is also going to submit a quote for pruning and tree work in all 3 parks
- Some of this has not been done for 40 years. So this work should be included as "bringing our parks back". But for the future, this type of tree maintenance should also go in the town budget as a line item.

### **Restrooms and Concession stand Improvements- Fran**

Fran went and looked at the restrooms, and they're clean now. But the stalls are not handicapped accessible. There is a lip at the entrance. The doors are very heavy. Duncan told Fran there is FEMA money for fixing up the interior. They have worked on the demolding and some clean up.

Improving accessibility - is that something we include in our overall plan for parks improvement? Access to get to the bathroom area, access to the building and stalls. The walls are just cinder block. Not a waterproof, graffiti resistant paint. That should be added to the project. There should be better lighting inside and out.

**Picnic Tables and benches.** One or two with wheelchair accessibility.

### **ROUND CHURCH GREEN**

**Stone Monument Cleaning** Megan got quotes for monument cleaning. One contact has connections with someone who died in war in Iraq. They would like to donate the cleaning of both the Adam Mueller and the Cochran family monuments. Fran mentioned that there is also a war memorial at the door of the Round Church. Perhaps if two are donated we pay to him to clean that one. Megan will check.

**Christmas Tree** Fran has a quote from Horsfords for a long lasting, sustainable tree. The "Charlie Brown" tree that was donated is not going to make it. The large tree is now almost too big for volunteers to add lighting and to maintain the lights. The Historical Society does the lighting and pays for the electricity. They switched to LED lights so the electricity is cheaper. As the smaller tree grows, it will be decorated rather than the large one. Volunteers always maintained the tree but it is now too big to do that. Question of hiring a boom truck for a few hours. Would that be a town responsibility to maintain the trees? Electricity source is also far from the tree.

Fran shared a historic photo of what the Round Church Green looked like with a fence around it. They would love to have a similar fence in the future.

**Brown's Court - Pickle ball** - Tess has gathered information from a variety of sources to learn about how towns went about installing pickleball courts. She got several recommendations of people to contact for installation. She was hoping to get 3 quotes. It has been challenging getting companies to respond. She was finally able to connect with a company who would come from St. Johnsbury, however they charge for a site visit. She asked if there was money for that. Denise shared information for resources and money that is available to us (see below next) .

-A estimate from a company in Colchester was

166,000 for the pickleball courts with a \$10,000 consulting fee.

- Another company had a more reasonable estimate. They have a contract with a person in Waterbury, that will do the excavation part. And then they come in and put in, in the courts. He actually gave Tess two, depending on type of cushion- Hardcore or cushioned.

One estimate was between \$85 and 90,000. The other estimate was for between \$110,00 and 115,00 (minute taker did not catch which surface

One large surface holds 4 pickle ball courts. Estimates include nets and fencing. She did not get estimates for bocce courts

## **OTHER**

### **Personnel and financial resources to help this committee**

Duncan has been appointed as our town personnel contact.

Denise reports that the town would pay for a grant writer, initial plans that we need such as for site visits and similar types of things. Denise will clarify if we have to go to the selectboard first or is there a budget. Does she just go to Jay and ask?

### **Presenting to Selectboard**

Discussed how to present our findings to the selectboard. One big vision with lots of components. Have each of these components broken down so Selectboard could choose what component to fund or see if there is another source for a specific project. Each of us takes ownership of a part to present.

Denise will talk with Josh about getting on the selectboard agenda for a presentation in January, perhaps an hour presentation

Should there be some budget for a clerk of works - who will see that all of these parts happen after our presentation?

### **Clarification Needed**

We need clarification as to what town employees should do on this project. ARPA funds vs town budget. (sidewalks, paths, base work)

Same for other areas. Would Josh Arnesson talk with us about information from baseball and soccer Does baseball and soccer have their own pool of money? What is to be coming out of the reserve funds. Are these areas our parks committee should also be looking at? Recreation committee? Paths committee? How and if these areas are to be included in the ARPA parks money that is marked for just this committee. That will go quickly. Or is that a different pool of ARPA money?

### **Questions**

Have we really looked at 12 to 17 yo activities?. Baseball, soccer, etc. yes. But what about a basketball court? Was that big in the surveys? Talk with Stephanie Hartsfield group. Or do they have other revenue sources - Tobacco settlement. Opioid settlement. Recreation is prevention!

### **Contacts**

We will maintain a list of all people we've consulted with and their area of expertise. Kendra will compile this list to include in our presentation to the Select Board.